

This letter, written by Brother Roger of Taizé and translated into 55 different languages (including 24 from Asia), was made public during the young adult European meeting in Lisbon. It will be used for reflection throughout the year 2005 during the weekly meetings in Taizé as well as those held elsewhere, in Europe or on other continents.

# Letter from Taizé

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## A Future of Peace

Letter 2005

1. These words were written six hundred years before Christ. See Jeremiah 29:11 and 31:17.

2. This year when ten new countries have joined the European Union, many young Europeans are aware that they live on a continent which, after having suffered from divisions and conflicts for many years, is now searching for unity and moving forward on the road of peace. Tensions remain, of course, as well as forms of injustice and even violence, which awaken doubts. The important thing is not to stop ahead of time: the search for peace lies at the very foundation of the building up of Europe. But this would be of no interest if its only purpose were to create a stronger, richer continent, and if Europe succumbed to the temptation to withdraw within its own borders. Europe becomes fully itself when it is open to other continents, in solidarity with poor nations. Its construction has meaning when it is seen as a step forward in the service of peace for the entire human family. That is why, if our meeting at the end of the year is called "a European meeting," we prefer to view it as a "pilgrimage of trust on earth."

**"God has plans for a future of peace for you, not of misfortune; God wants to give you a future and a hope."**<sup>1</sup>

Today, a great many people are longing for a future of peace, for humanity to be freed from threats of violence.

If some are gripped by worry about the future and find themselves at a standstill, there are also young people all over the world who are inventive and creative.

These young people do not let themselves be caught up in a spiral of gloom. They know that God did not create us to be passive. For them, life is not subject to a blind destiny. They are aware that scepticism and discouragement have the power to paralyze human beings.

And so they are searching, with their whole soul, to prepare a future of peace and not of misfortune. More than they realize, they are already making of their lives a light that shines around them.

Some are bearers of peace and trust in situations of crisis and conflict. They keep going even when trials or failures weigh heavily on their shoulders.<sup>2</sup>



On some summer evenings in Taizé, under a sky laden with stars, we can hear the young people through our open windows. We are constantly astonished that there are so many of them. They search; they pray. And we say to ourselves: their aspirations to peace and trust are like these stars, points of lights that shine in the night.

**We** live at a time when many people are asking: what is faith? Faith is a simple trust in God, an indispensable surge of trusting undertaken countless times over in the course of our life.

All of us can have doubts. They are nothing to worry about. Our deepest desire is to listen to Christ who whispers in our hearts, "Do you have hesitations? Don't worry; the Holy Spirit remains with you always."<sup>3</sup>

Some, to their surprise, have made this discovery: God's love can come to fulfilment even in a heart touched by doubts.<sup>4</sup>

**One** of the first things Christ says in the Gospel is this: "Happy the simple-hearted!"<sup>5</sup> Yes, happy those who head towards simplicity, simplicity of heart and simplicity of life.

A simple heart attempts to live in the present moment, to welcome each day as God's today.

Does not the spirit of simplicity shine out in serene joy, and also in cheerfulness?

A simple heart does not claim to understand everything about faith on its own. It says to itself, "Others understand better what I have trouble grasping and they help me to continue on my way."<sup>6</sup>

Simplifying our life enables us to share with the least fortunate, in order to alleviate suffering where there is disease, poverty, famine...<sup>7</sup>

**Our** personal prayer is also simple. Do we think that many words are needed in order to pray?<sup>8</sup> No. A few words, even

**3.** See John 14:16-18, 27. God exists independently of our faith or our doubts. When there is doubt within us, that does not mean that God has left us.

**4.** One day Dostoyevsky wrote in his *Notebook*: "I am a child of doubt and unbelief. What terrible suffering it has cost me and still costs me, this longing to believe, which is so much the stronger in my soul as more arguments against it rise up within me.... My 'hosanna' has passed through the crucible of doubt." And yet Dostoyevsky could also write: "There is nothing more beautiful, more profound and more perfect than Christ. Not only is there nothing, but there can be nothing." When that man of God suggests that the non-believer coexists in him with the believer, his passionate love for Christ still remains undiminished.

**5.** Matthew 5:3.

**6.** Even if our trust remains fragile, we do not rely only on our own faith but on the trust of all those who have gone before us as well as those who are around us.

**7.** The UN World Food Program recently published a map of world hunger. Despite the progress accomplished in the last few years, 840 million people suffer from hunger, including 180 million children under the age of five.

**8.** See Matthew 6:7-8.



## Pope John Paul II

Dear young people, the Pope joins in prayer with all of you who are together in Lisbon at the initiative of the Taizé Community. During your days, you will have the opportunity to live in an intimate relationship with the Lord and to have an experience of church with the communities of Portugal, while thanking God for the gifts the Lord has given you.

In order to be solid Christians, you are called to return to the wellsprings of the faith to discover the depths of the mystery of God. This knowledge will help you to love Christ, to serve him in his Church and to bear witness in the world, in the places where you are sent. You also are experiencing communion among young people; this communion is the foundation of inner peace and brotherhood. When you return home, become creators of peace and unity to an ever greater degree! The city where you are meeting, Lisbon, is open to the world. May you, in turn, be open to your brothers and sisters from different cultures to make the planet a society which is more and more like a family!

Entrusting you to the intercession of Our Lady of Fatima, Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church, the Holy Father grants an affectionate apostolic blessing to you as well as to the Taizé Community, to the organizers of the gathering, and to the Christian communities and the families who are offering you hospitality.

## Patriarch Bartholomeos of Constantinople

From the Church of Constantinople, this venerable and crucified ecumenical Patriarchate, we send our fatherly and heartfelt greetings to the young people, bearers of hope who, at the invitation of the Taizé brothers, are together in Lisbon to witness to the hope which is in us.

In spite of national, cultural and denominational differences, you have come together to give the joyful and luminous message of salvation in Christ, whose birth we are celebrating these days. You have come to confess with one voice and to translate into facts that Christianity still has a lot to say to the world, to reveal the substance and the meaning of life.

Christ, the Gospel, invites us first and foremost to a spiritual revolution, to continue the work of the apostles and the prophets, to express with our life that God has really come to us, that He took on the human condition and will make us divine by grace, as Saint Athanasius the Great emphasizes, to radiate His presence as a presence of love, of brotherhood, of kindness, of patience and of forgiveness.

Dear young Christians of Europe, in congratulating you with all my heart for the vitality of your love for Christ and in asking Him to bestow his abundant blessings on you throughout the new year 2005, we remain, from the Church of Constantinople, your fervent intercessor with the Lord Jesus who became flesh and who has saved the world.

## The Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr Kofi Annan

Dear friends of Taizé and young people from throughout the world, this year again you have come from throughout Europe and from other continents to celebrate peace, harmony and understanding among peoples. In the name of the United Nations Organization and in my own name, I wish to send you my warmest greetings on the occasion of this new stage in the "pilgrimage of trust on earth."

At this time of uncertainty concerning the future of our world, a meeting like yours is an encouragement and a sign of hope for us. The ideal of peace, justice and solidarity that brings you together is likewise at the heart of the actions of the United Nations across the world. Day by day, the UN attempts to make this ideal a reality. To succeed, it needs more than ever the energy and the contribution of all, especially the young. And so I am happy about the fervor of your commitment. You show that a better world is possible. When each of you returns home, keep in mind these days of sharing and continue to bring your message of hope and trust to the world. Together we can change things and build a future of peace and prosperity for all.

All my best wishes for success go with you for your twenty-seventh annual meeting.

## Patriarch Alexis II of Moscow

I am happy that faith in Christ our Saviour motivates the many young people—from different countries, peoples, cultures and commitments—at your gathering.

These kinds of meetings are important today when we see that Western society is unfortunately getting further and further away from Christian values. The result is that many, especially the young, lose their spiritual and moral reference-points and find themselves in a blind alley.

As young Christians, you represent the future of Europe and much depends on you. I invite you not to try and be like "everybody" by conforming to a style of life oriented only towards acquiring material possessions and satisfactions. Witness to the Lord fearlessly and may your efforts be worthy of Christian hope. Be the light of the world (Matt 5:14)! Remember that hope and love, without which human life loses its meaning, must be firmly united to our faith.

A tree cannot live without roots. In the same way, a society that forgets its origins loses its vitality. And a person who loses his or her link with the Creator is condemned to suffer. The human soul, by its own nature, seeks God to find in him the meaning of its existence. One of the heroes of the undivided Church, Augustine of Hippo, said, "You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts can never rest until they rest in You."

My wish is that your meeting may be a confirmation of these words and a reminder that Christianity has been, remains and will be a foundation of European civilization. I believe that the youth of Europe, inspired



The anonymous prophet who spoke during Israel's exile in Babylon announced to his compatriots that they would return to their homeland, but his hearers no longer had the courage to believe him. Their morale was broken. A nation in exile was considered doomed to disappear. Did not this situation mean that God no longer had compassion on his faithful or, worse still, that he showed himself to be powerless in the face of events?

To the physical exhaustion was thus added a profound weariness of faith. And it was up to the prophet to pull the people out of this paralysis by showing them a new way of looking at God. Lift up your eyes and look at the sky with all the movements of the stars (the Babylonians were good at astronomy). Who is behind this great array, behind the extreme complexity of these movements? You should not regard your God in a too-human manner, conceive his wisdom like that of a human brain or his strength as an energy which will inevitably be depleted.

If God is God, he must of necessity be beyond anything you can imagine. If today the human sciences have made lots of ways of representing God outdated and if because of this many people have trouble believing, for your part look beyond these ruins, for the true God can only be other than what is said of him. His strength is fundamentally different from any deployment of human power; his intelligence has resources we cannot even imagine.

In our current exhaustion which is not only due to our rhythm of life but which certainly also comes from the trouble we have in believing, the anonymous prophet would wish us to acquire a fresh way of looking at God, the astonishment of people who admit they have not yet understood who God is. It is not a matter of forcing ourselves to believe, but rather of letting the eyes of our heart be illuminated (Ephesians 1:18), so that something of the eternal newness of God can be reflected in them.

- Does this text enlighten us in our present difficulties of discouragement and fatigue?
- Although the prophet struggles against all forms of passivity, he does not preach unbridled activism. What does he want us to attain?
- In a time like ours when God seems to be absent, how can the freshness of faith be renewed in those who believe?

These Bible meditations are meant as a way of seeking God in silence and prayer in the midst of our daily life. During the course of a day, take an hour or so to read the Bible passage with the short commentary and to reflect on the questions which follow. Afterwards, a group of 3 to 10 people can meet to share what they have discovered and perhaps for a time of prayer.

by the love of Christ, will be fully able to employ its talents in the service of God and of neighbour.

## The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams

It is a great joy—and a great encouragement—to know that tens of thousands of young adults from many nations are expected in Lisbon for this year's European meeting.

The themes of peace, simplicity and communion on which you will be reflecting are at the heart of our faith. As God draws you deeper into prayer, may the communion between you be strengthened and the Christlike simplicity of God's saints grow in your lives; and as you return to your homes, may the Spirit's renewing power enable you to be channels of God's peace in our troubled world.

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Exterior circumstances would normally lead the relationships in this story to be very different. The centurion is an officer in a military force of occupation, but astonishingly he has won the friendship of the local people. Whereas masters are not usually very interested in the welfare of their employees, he is deeply concerned about his sick servant—as if he were his own child. He is also full of respect for the people where he has been sent: he has built them a Sabbath meeting place (possibly the same synagogue mentioned in Luke 4:33), and because he knows it would make a Jew ritually unclean to come into his house, he sends messengers to Jesus saying, "I am not worthy for you to come under my roof."

When we see a situation of conflict and hostility, we usually think it is useless to act. The centurion shows how courageous love has more effect than we suppose. It is a sign. There is a wall of hostility between the local people and the foreigners living there. But the centurion's love for the people has made a crack in that wall. It can no longer be absolute. He shows that there are exceptions.

The centurion's words to Jesus express a hope and trust in a straightforward, practical manner. He understands the nature of authority, and he knows that Jesus has full power in this matter. Like us, he is from completely outside the Jewish culture, from outside the Biblical world; his words are "non-religious" and yet Jesus immediately recognises the faith he has. Notice his words: "For I am under authority myself..." The centurion does not only say, "I know what it is to have people obedient to me", but he shows that he realises that real authority is conferred when we are entrusted with responsibility by someone else. He understands that Jesus has been sent and is himself "under authority". He reminds us of Jesus' insistence upon "the one who sent me".

- What situation(s) do I care about deeply, and really want healing for?
- In which situations could I help create an unexpected reconciliation?
- Where do I see faith—even if it is expressed unconventionally?

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God, you love us,  
and when we  
realize that your  
love is above all  
forgiveness, our  
hearts are soothed  
and even  
transformed.

**6 SUN** Jn 9:1-41  
Jesus said to his  
disciples: We must do the work  
of the one who sent me, while  
the daylight lasts. While I am in  
the world, I am the light of the  
world.

**7 Mon** 1 Th 5:12-28  
May God him-  
self, the God of peace, sanctify  
you through and through, and  
may your spirit, soul and body  
be kept blameless for the com-  
ing of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
The one who calls you is faith-  
ful, and he will do this.

**8 Tue** Mk 1:21-28  
Jesus taught in  
the synagogue. And his teach-  
ing made a deep impression on  
them because, unlike the  
scribes, he spoke with author-  
ity.

**9 Wed** 1 P 1:3-9  
Though you  
have not seen Christ Jesus, you  
love him. Still without seeing  
him you believe in him and so  
are already filled with a joy so  
glorious it cannot be described.

**10 Thu** Jr 2:1-13  
The Lord said of  
his people: They have forsaken  
me, the fount of living water, and  
have dug themselves cracked  
cisterns that will not hold water.

**11 Fri** Lk 22:24-27  
Jesus said to his  
disciples: Who is the greater:  
the one at table or the one who  
serves? The one at table,  
surely? Yet I am among you as  
one who serves.

**12 Sat** Jn 17:1-11  
Jesus prayed to  
his Father for his disciples, say-  
ing: Keep those you have given  
me true to your name, so that  
they may be one as we are one.

**1 Tue** Mk 9:17-29  
Someone said to  
Jesus: I believe! Help my lack of  
faith.

**2 Wed** 1 Tm 4:7-16  
St. Paul writes:  
Train yourself to live in godli-  
ness: it holds out promise both  
for the present life and the life to  
come.

**3 Thu** 2 Co 3:4-6  
God has made us  
able to serve a new covenant,  
one which is not of written let-  
ters but of the Spirit; for the letter  
kills, but the Spirit gives life.

**4 Fri** Ph 1:20-26  
Paul writes: Now  
as always, Christ will be exalted  
in my body, whether by life or by  
death. For me, to live is Christ.

**5 Sat** Is 45:3-7  
The Lord says:  
Though you did not know me, I  
have called you by your name.

**13 SUN** Jn 11:1-45  
Jesus said: I am  
the resurrection and the life.  
Those who believe in me, even  
though they die, will live.

**14 Mon** Rv 3:7-8  
Thus says the  
Lord: Though you are not very  
strong, you have kept my Word,  
and now I have opened before  
you a door that no one can  
close.

**15 Tue** Jn 3:14-21  
Jesus said: Who-  
ever acts according to the truth  
comes into the light, so that it  
may be seen plainly that what  
they are doing is done in God.

**16 Wed** Jn 6:67-69  
Seeing that  
many of his disciples were turn-  
ing away, Jesus said to the  
Twelve, "What about you, do  
you want to go away too?" Peter  
answered, "Lord, to whom  
would we go? You have the  
words of eternal life."

**17 Thu** 1 Co 1:22-25  
We proclaim  
Christ crucified, which to the  
nations is foolishness, but to  
those whom God has called it is  
Christ, the strength and the wis-  
dom of God.

**18 Fri** Heb 5:1-10  
Jesus offered up  
prayer and entreaty to the one  
who could save him from death;  
he surrendered himself and he  
was heard.

**19 Sat** Lk 2:41-52  
St JOSEPH  
When Mary and Joseph found  
the child Jesus in the Temple,  
he said to them, "Why were you  
looking for me? Did you not  
know that I must be in my Fa-  
ther's house?" And his mother  
treasured all these things in her  
heart.

**20 SUN** Mt 21:1-11  
PALM SUNDAY  
See, your king is approaching,  
humble and riding on a donkey  
and on a colt, the foal of a beast  
of burden.

**21 Mon** Mk 14:32-42  
At Gethsemane,  
Jesus prayed saying: Father,  
everything is possible for you.  
Take this cup from me; yet not  
what I will, but what you will.

**22 Tue** Jn 12:20-30  
Jesus said: In  
truth, unless a grain of wheat  
falls into the earth and dies it re-  
mains only a single grain. But if  
it dies, it yields a big harvest.

**23 Wed** 2 Co 1:8-11  
Paul writes:  
When overburdened to the  
point of despair, we learnt to  
rely, not on ourselves, but on  
God who raises the dead to life.

**24 Thu** 2 Co 5:13-17  
Christ died for all,  
that those who live should no  
longer live for themselves but  
for the one who died and was  
raised to life for them.

**25 Fri** Lk 23:33-34  
GOOD FRIDAY  
On the cross, Jesus said: Fa-  
ther, forgive them; they do not  
know what they are doing.

**26 Sat** 1 Jn 2:7-10  
The darkness is  
passing and the true light is al-  
ready shining. Whoever loves  
their neighbour remains in the  
light.

**27 SUN** Col 3:1-4  
EASTER DAY  
You have been raised with  
Christ, so set your hearts on  
things above. For you have died  
and now the life you have is hid-  
den with Christ in God.

**28 Mon** Is 58:7-10  
If you do away  
with the accusing finger and  
malicious talk, if you give what  
is yours for the hungry, then  
your light will rise in the dark-  
ness and your darkest hour will  
be like the middle of the day.

**29 Tue** 1 P 3:18-22  
Christ was put to  
death in the body and raised to  
life in the Spirit. And in the Spirit  
he also went to announce the  
Gospel to those who once had  
refused to believe.

**30 Wed** Lk 24:35-48  
The Risen Christ  
opened the minds of his disci-  
ples to understand the scrip-  
tures, and he said to them,  
"Thus is it written that the Christ  
would suffer and on the third  
day rise from the dead."

**31 Thu** Jn 15:9-13  
Jesus said: This  
is my commandment — love  
one another as I have loved  
you.

MARCH

DAILY READINGS

These short readings are those  
read, day by day, at commu-  
nity prayer in I ai zé. The Bible  
reference given indicates a  
slightly longer passage.



Jesus our hope,  
you have a call for  
each one of us and  
you say to us:  
come, follow me;  
you will discover  
where to find rest  
for your heart.

**3 SUN** Jn 20:24-29  
Thomas said to Jesus, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus replied, "You believe because you can see me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."

**4 Mon** 1 P 5:6-11  
Peter writes: Cast all your anxiety on God, because God cares for you.

**5 Tue** Ws 1:1-3  
Seek God in simplicity of heart; for the Lord reveals himself to those who do not refuse him their trust.

**6 Wed** Heb 12:1-2  
Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, to run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection.

**7 Thu** Heb 4:14-16  
Jesus is well able to understand our weakness. He was tempted in every way as we are, yet was without sin.

**8 Fri** Ps 46  
God is our refuge and strength, and an ever present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be in turmoil.

**9 Sat** Mt 6:25-34  
Jesus said: Do not be anxious about your life... Your Father in heaven knows what you need. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself.

**1 Fri** Rm 8:31-39  
Who could condemn us? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God, interceding for us.

**2 Sat** Jn 10:11-18  
Jesus said: I am the good shepherd. My sheep will listen to my voice and there will be one flock and one shepherd.

**10 SUN** Lk 24:13-35  
While two disciples were on their way to Emmaus, talking together about all that had happened, Jesus himself came up and walked with them.

**11 Mon** Jm 1:17-27  
James writes: Humbly accept the word planted in you, which can give you life.

**12 Tue** Sl 35:12-14, 16-18 (35:14-22)  
God is utterly impartial. God never shows partiality to the detriment of the poor, but listens to the prayer of the one who is wronged.

**13 Wed** Is 30:15  
The Lord says: Your salvation is in returning and rest, your strength lies in calm and trust.

**14 Thu** Heb 10:19-25  
Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and in fullness of faith. Let us hold to the hope we profess, without wavering, for the one who has promised is faithful.

**15 Fri** Lk 6:27-35  
Jesus said: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

**16 Sat** Ep 4:17-32  
Let yourselves be made new in the attitude of your minds and be clothed with the new self, which is created to be like God in justice and in holiness of the truth.

**17 SUN** Jn 10:1-10  
Jesus said: I am the gate. Anyone who enters through me will be safe; they will go in and out, and will find pasture.

**18 Mon** 1 Jn 2:24-28  
John wrote to the first Christians: Let what you heard in the beginning remain in you. Then you also will remain in the Son and in the Father.

**19 Tue** 2 Co 8:7-15  
Be generous, for you know the generosity of our Lord Jesus Christ who became poor for your sake.

**20 Wed** Dt 7:7-8  
Moses told the people: God set his heart on you and chose you, not because you are more numerous than other peoples, but out of love for you.

**21 Thu** Jn 4:5-42  
Jesus said: Anyone who drinks the water I give will never be thirsty again. The water I give them will become a spring of water within them, welling up to eternal life.

**22 Fri** 1 Co 7:29-31  
Paul writes: From now on those who buy something should live as if they had no possessions and those who use the things of the world should do so without being engrossed in them. Because this world as we know it is passing away.

**23 Sat** Jr 17:5-8  
The person who trusts in the Lord is like a tree planted by the water: in a year of drought it is untroubled and never ceases to bear fruit.

**24 SUN** Jn 14:1-12  
Philip said to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus said, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father."

**25 Mon** Mk 16:15-20  
St MARK  
After Jesus' ascension, the disciples went out and proclaimed the Gospel everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word.

**26 Tue** Mt 5:1-12  
Jesus said: Happy are the clear in heart: they shall see God. Happy are the peacemakers: they shall be called children of God.

**27 Wed** Jude 20-21  
Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

**28 Thu** Jn 10:11-18  
Jesus said: There are other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and I must lead these too. They too will listen to my voice, and there will be only one flock and one shepherd.

**29 Fri** Lk 6:46-49  
Jesus said: Whoever comes to me, listens to my words and acts on them is like someone building a house who digs down deep and lays the foundations on rock.

**30 Sat** Jn 13:31-35  
Jesus said: It is by your love for one another that everyone will recognize you as my disciples.

# APRIL

## DAILY READINGS

These short readings are those read, day by day, at community prayer in Taizé. The Bible reference given indicates a slightly longer passage.



9. This road of surrender can be sustained by simple songs, sung over and over again, such as this one: "My soul finds rest and peace in God alone." While we work or when we rest, these songs keep echoing within our hearts.

10. Matthew 19:14.

11. A nine-year-old boy who came to pray with us for a week said to me one day, "My father left us. I never see him, but I still love him and at night I pray for him."

12. See 1 Peter 3:18; Romans 1:4; 1 Timothy 3:16.

inept ones, are enough to entrust everything to God, our fears as well as our hopes.

By surrendering ourselves to the Holy Spirit, we will find the way that leads from worry to confident trust.<sup>9</sup> And we tell him:

"Holy Spirit, enable us  
to turn to you at every moment.  
So often we forget that you dwell within us,  
that you pray in us, that you love in us.  
Your presence in us is trust  
and constant forgiveness."

Yes, the Holy Spirit kindles a glimmer of light within us. However faint it may be, it awakens in our hearts the desire for God. And the simple desire for God is already prayer.

Prayer does not make us less involved in the world. On the contrary, nothing is more responsible than to pray. The more we make our own a prayer which is simple and humble, the more we are led to love and to express it with our life.

**W**here can we find the simplicity indispensable for living out the Gospel? Some words of Christ enlighten us. One day he said to his disciples, "Let the little children come to me; the realities of God are for those who are like them."<sup>10</sup>

Who can express adequately what some children can communicate by their trusting?<sup>11</sup>

And so we would like to say to God: "God, you love us: turn us into people who are humble; give us great simplicity in our prayer, in human relationships, in welcoming others..."

**J**esus, the Christ, came to earth not to condemn anyone but to open paths of communion for human beings.

For two thousand years Christ has been present through the Holy Spirit,<sup>12</sup> and his mysterious presence



is made tangible in a visible communion<sup>13</sup> that brings together women, men and young people who are called to go forward together, without separating from one another.<sup>14</sup>

And yet throughout their history Christians have experienced many upheavals: separations have arisen between those who nonetheless professed faith in the same God of love.

Re-establishing communion is urgent today; it cannot continually be put off until later, until the end of time.<sup>15</sup> Will we do all we can for Christians to awaken to the spirit of communion?<sup>16</sup>

There are Christians who, without waiting, are already in communion with one another in the places where they live, quite humbly, quite simply.<sup>17</sup>

Through their own life, they would like to make Christ present for many others. They know that the Church does not exist for itself but for the world, to place within it a ferment of peace.

"Communion" is one of the most beautiful names of the Church. In it, there can be no harsh words exchanged but only transparency, heartfelt kindness, compassion...and the gates of holiness swing open.

The Gospel lets us discover this surprising reality: God creates neither fear nor worry. All God can do is love us.

By the presence of the Holy Spirit, God comes to transfigure our hearts.

And in a simple prayer, we can sense that we are never alone: the Holy Spirit sustains in us a communion with God, not just for a fleeting moment but right on into the life which never ends.

**13.** That communion is called the Church. In the heart of God, the Church is one; it cannot be divided.

**14.** The closer we come to the Gospel, the closer we come to one another. And the separations that tear us apart draw to an end.

**15.** Christ calls us to be reconciled without delay. We cannot forget his words in the Gospel according to Saint Matthew: "When you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, first go and be reconciled" (5:23-24). "First go" not "Put it off till later."

**16.** In Damascus, in the Middle East beset by trials, there lives the Greek Orthodox patriarch of Antioch, Ignatius IV. He has written these striking words: "The ecumenical movement is going backwards. What remains of the prophetic event of the early days incarnated in figures like Pope John XXIII and Patriarch Athenagoras? Our divisions make Christ unrecognizable; they are contrary to his will to see us be one 'so that the world may believe.' We have an urgent need for prophetic initiatives in order to bring ecumenism out of the twists and turns in which I fear it is getting stuck. We have an urgent need for prophets and saints to help our Churches to be converted by mutual forgiveness."

**17.** During his visit to Taizé on October 5th, 1986, Pope John Paul II suggested a path to communion by saying to our community: "By desiring to be yourselves a 'parable of community', you will help all whom you meet to be faithful to their denominational ties, the fruit of their education and their choice in conscience, but also to enter more and more deeply into the mystery of communion that the Church is in God's plan."